

Message Text

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FOLLOWING REPEAT FUKUOKA 7483 ACTION SECSTATE TOKYO 10 MAR

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE FUKUOKA 7483

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: TGEN, PINT, ENRG, JA

SUBJ: ANOTHER RADIOACTIVE LEAK AT NUCLEAR-POWERED ELECTRIC
GENERATING PLANT

REF: (A) 75 FUKUOKA A-04

(B) 75 FUKUOKA 073

ON THE AFTERNOON OF MARCH 9, A MINOR RADIOACTIVE LEAK OCCURRED
AT KYUSHU ELECTRIC'S GENKAO NUMBER ONE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT NEAR
KARATSU, SAGA PREFECTURE. THOUGH THE LEAK ITSELF WAS MINOR
(.5 CURIES OVER A PERIOD OF FIVE MINUTES), AND WAS CAUSED BY
SIMPLE CARELESSNESS OF A WORKER WHO FORGOT TO TIGHTEN A VALVE,
THE TIMING AND PRESS COVERAGE ARE VERY BAD FOR KYUSHU ELECTRIC.
WE HAVE REPORTED OVER THE PAST COUPLE OF YEARS HOW LOCAL OPINION
HAS SWITCHED FROM WELCOMING A NUCLEAR POWER PLANT TO ACTIVE
OPPOSITION IN SENDAI, KAGOSHIMA PREFECTURE, AND HOW LEAKAGE AT
THE GENKAO PLANT IN JUNE OF LAST YEAR HAS STIFFENED LOCAL OPPO-
SITION (REF B). YESTERDAY'S LEAK WILL PROBABLY CAUSE CONSIDERABLY
MORE TO NEW CONSTRUCTION. PRESS COVERAGE OF THE LEAK WAS HEAVY
AND EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS TYPIFIED BY YOMIURI, WHICH COMMENTED:
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"ANOTHER ACCIDENT TOOK PLACE LESS THAN YEAR AFTER A LEAK CAUSED

BY METAL FAILURE. EVEN THOUGH THE LEAK WAS SMALL, A SERIES OF ACCIDENTS WILL CAUSE DISTRUST OF ATOMIC POWER." KYUSHU ELECTRIC'S PRESIDENT IMMEDIATELY STATED THAT THE LEAKAGE HAD BEEN ACCIDENTAL AND WAS IN ANY CASE NOT IMPORTANT. HOWEVER, THE LOCAL ASAHI POINTED OUT THAT THE ELECTRIC DEVELOPMENT ADJUSTMENT COUNCIL (DENGEN KAIHATSU CHOSEI SHINGIKAI), CHAIRED BY THE PRIME MINISTER IS TO MEET THIS MONTH AND WAS TO CONSIDER APPROVAL OF KYUSHU ELECTRIC'S APPLICATION TO BUILD THE SENDAI PLANT. ASAHI SAID THAT ACCIDENT MIGHT DEFER APPROVAL AND RE-KINDLE LOCAL OPPOSITION TO CONSTRUCTION.

COMMENT: OUR FINAL SENTENCE IN A-04 OF LAST JANUARY WAS "IN VIEW OF THE DIFFICULTIES THEY (KYUSHU ELECTRIC) HAVE FACED SO FAR AND THE MUTSU PROBLEMS, ANY SORT OF ACCIDENT WOULD MAKE THEIR NUCLEAR POWER PLANT DEVELOPMENT EXTREMELY DIFFICULT." THIS PREDICTION SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN AMPLY BORNE OUT BY NOT ONE, BUT TWO LEAKS. PRINCIPAL OFFICER VISITED GENKAI PLANT LAST MONTH AND WAS TOLD BY MANAGER THAT FIRST LEAK HAD CAUSED GREAT DEAL OF TROUBLE AND COST KYUSHU ELECTRIC CONSIDERABLE MONEY. HE SAID THAT MEASURES HAD BEEN TAKEN TO INSURE THAT NO FURTHER ACCIDENTS COULD POSSIBLY OCCUR, SINCE THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT WOULD BE SO GREAT. ALTHOUGH IT IS TOO SOON TO MAKE DEFINITIVE STATEMENT, WE PREDICT THAT LATEST RADIOACTIVE LEAK WILL BE REAL SET-BACK FOR KYUSHU ELECTRIC'S PLANNED CONSTRUCTION OF NUCLEAR-POWERED GENERATING PLANTS. IT ALSO SEEMS POSSIBLE THAT ADVERSE EFFECTS WILL NOT BE CONFINED TO SHORT RUN. END COMMENT.
RICHARDSON UNQUOTE KISSINGER

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